

2008 STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS - Highlights 1-28-08

Theme:

The overarching theme is that **trusting and empowering** the American people to make wise decisions will lead to a prosperous future for our Nation. The President will also reaffirm his belief in the power of freedom.

- The speech is forward-looking, reflecting the President's "**sprint to the finish**" mindset.
- The President will call on Congress to complete important **unfinished business** to protect Americans and to ensure that our country continues to prosper.
- The President will identify potential **areas of agreement with a Democrat-controlled Congress**, including new policy proposals with realistic chances for enactment this year.

ECONOMY

We must trust the people with their own money and empower them to grow our economy.

- **Current economy** – in a period of uncertainty / Americans can be confident in long term growth.
- **Growth package** – don't delay it or derail it.
- **Tax cuts permanent** – otherwise 116 million Americans will see taxes rise by an average \$1,800.
- **2009 budget** - terminates or reduces 151 wasteful or bloated programs totaling more than \$18 billion / surplus in 2012.
- **Earmarks** – The President will veto any appropriations bill that doesn't cut in half the number and cost of earmarks.
 - Executive Order Tuesday will direct agencies to ignore future earmarks not voted on by Congress.

HOUSING

We must trust Americans with the responsibility of home ownership & empower them through turbulent times.

- The President has acted to help homeowners avoid foreclosure.
- Congress should enact reforms & modernize the Federal Housing Admin as the President proposed.

HEALTH CARE

We must trust patients and doctors to make medical decisions & empower them with better information/options.

- Make health care more affordable and accessible and expand consumer choice.
- **Tax code changes** - to make private health insurance more accessible to millions.
- Expand **health savings accounts** and confront junk medical lawsuits.

EDUCATION

We must trust students to learn if given the chance & empower parents to demand results from our schools.

- **No Child Left Behind** – build on success - 4th and 8th graders highest math scores on record last year.
 - Increase accountability and flexibility/ extra help for struggling schools.
- **D.C. Opportunity Scholarships** have given more than 2,600 kids new hope in a new school.
- **White House Summit** to address declining number of faith-based schools and the needs of low-income inner city students that non-public schools have traditionally served.
- **Pell Grants for Kids** - \$300 million to provide alternatives for kids in struggling public schools.

TRADE

We must trust Americans to compete with anyone in the world & empower them by opening new markets.

- **Free trade agreements** – level the playing field - commend Peru FTA passage.
 - **Colombia, Panama and South Korea** – should approve – better access to nearly 100 million new customers.
 - Colombia is a friend / confronting violence and terror / needs support.
 - **Trade Adjustment Assistance** – reauthorize and reform to help displaced workers.
- **Doha Round** - must complete agreement this year – unprecedented opportunity to break down barriers.

ENERGY/CLIMATE

We must trust in the creative genius of American researchers and entrepreneurs & empower them to pioneer a new generation of clean energy technology.

- **Energy bill** – important bipartisan step – need to build on it, reduce dependence on oil.
- **Fund new technologies** - carbon capture coal power/ emissions-free nuclear power/ advanced batteries.
- **Climate change**- create a \$2 billion international clean energy technology fund to help developing nations.
 - International agreement with potential to slow, stop, eventually reverse growth of greenhouse gases.
 - Only effective if it includes commitments by every major economy and gives none free ride.

FOREIGN POLICY / WAR ON TERROR

We trust that people, when given the chance, will choose a future of freedom and peace.

- **Afghanistan** – more children in school & new roads/ adding 3,200 Marines to ensure successes continue
- **Iraq** – Surge is achieving results few could have imagined a year ago – work is not finished, but progress is being made.
 - Civilian deaths & high-profile terrorist attacks down/ more than 20,000 “return on success” troops coming home.
 - Iraqi government - sharing oil revenues with provinces/ parliament passed pension law and de-Baathification reform.
 - 100,000 new Iraqi soldiers/police in past year/ 80,000 Iraqi citizens fighting terrorists.
 - Congress must fully fund the troops - our military has heroically done all it has been asked to do.
 - Any further drawdown of U.S. troops must be based on conditions/ commanders' recommendations.
 - A free Iraq will deny al Qaida a safe haven/ but a failed Iraq would embolden extremists.
- **Israelis and Palestinians** – new cause for hope of peace agreement – America is committed to help.
- **Iran** – seems to oppose advance of freedom – developing ballistic missiles and continues to develop capability to enrich uranium.
 - Message to Iranian leaders: rejoin community of nations - suspend nuclear enrichment/stop oppression.

PROTECT AMERICA ACT (FISA)

- Must have ability to monitor terrorist comms – need to know who terrorists are talking to, what they're saying.
- Congress must act now - before current law expires to ensure flow of vital intelligence not disrupted.
 - Need liability protection for companies believed to have assisted in efforts to defend America.

WOUNDED WARRIORS/ MILITARY FAMILIES

- **Dole/Shalala reforms** – Congress should enact reforms, improve system of care for wounded warriors
 - The exec branch has acted on all the recommendations put to us.
- **Vet funding** – increased by more than 95 percent over past seven years.
- **Military families** – sacrifice for America/ we have responsibility to provide for them. President to propose:
 - Expanding access to childcare.
 - Creating new hiring preferences for military spouses across the Federal government.
 - Allowing troops to transfer unused education benefits to spouses or children.

GLOBAL COMPASSION

- America is leading the fight against global hunger – providing more than half the world's food aid.
- **Millennium Challenge** (strengthens democracy/transparency) – Congress should fully fund
- **Emergency Food Aid** – Congress should support buying crops directly from farmers in developing world
- **Malaria** – cut malaria-related deaths by half in 15 African countries
- **AIDS** – our plan is treating more than 1 million people– call on Congress to double initial commitment by approving additional \$30 billion over next five years

STEM CELLS

We must trust in the innovative spirit of medical researchers & empower them to discover new treatments while respecting moral boundaries.

- Landmark achievement in November involving reprogrammed adult skin cells has potential to move us beyond divisive debates – President has directed Federal agencies to provide new funding for this ethical type of stem cell research.

JUDICIAL NOMINEES

On matters of justice, we must trust in the wisdom of our Founders & empower judges who understand that the Constitution means what it says.

- The President's nominees will *interpret* the laws – not try to *make* them
- Many being unfairly delayed, Senate should give each an up or down vote

FAITH-BASED & COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

In communities across our land, we must trust in the good heart of the American people & empower them to serve their neighbors in need.

- **Charitable Choice** – permanently extend - help guarantee equal treatment for faith-based organizations when they compete for Federal funds.
- **Gulf Coast Region** – applaud the resiliency/ reaffirm pledge to help them build it stronger than before.

COMPETITIVENESS

We must trust in the skill of our scientists & engineers - empower them to pursue the breakthroughs of tomorrow.

- American Competitiveness Initiative – Congress hasn't fully funded/ should double federal support for critical research in the physical sciences.

ENTITLEMENT SPENDING/IMMIGRATION

- **Entitlement Spending** - The President laid out proposals to reform entitlement programs – will call on Congress to offer *their* proposals.
- **Immigration** – taking steps to secure borders/ effectively ended “catch and release” / doubling number of border patrol agents.

New Policies/Ideas Proposed:

1. Executive Order on earmarks
2. Pell Grants for Kids
3. White House Summit on inner city children and faith-based schools
4. New support of military families (access to child care/ fed hiring preference/ transfer education benefits)